

To: MLPA Stakeholder Group Members and other interested parties

Attention: Ken Jones

It has recently come to our attention that draft proposals have been created which would designate the Pescadero Lagoon marsh/estuary complex in San Mateo County as a "State Marine Reserve" as part of the ongoing process for development of the North Central Coast Marine Protected Area planning effort.

It is our understanding that within a designated "State Marine Reserve," all recreational fishing, including shore-based fishing, would be prohibited. We strongly oppose any designation for Pescadero Lagoon that would restrict recreational fishing activities in this location beyond California Department of Fish and Game regulations.

Pescadero Lagoon has been historically and is currently open for recreational steelhead fishing on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays (and holidays) during the months of December, January and February. This is a "no take / catch and release" fishery, restricted to barbless hooks.

The only fishing that occurs in the Lagoon is for steelhead during this limited season. With these current restrictions in place, we believe eliminating recreational steelhead fishing in this Lagoon would not provide substantially more protection for this species, but it would eliminate the only high-quality non-ocean/bay steelhead fishing opportunity in San Mateo County. Losing this fishing destination would unnecessarily obligate local fishermen to drive great lengths (to Sonoma or Mendocino) to recreate in similar coastal steelhead streams and conditions and would increase fishing pressure at these locations.

Generations of steelhead fishermen continue to treasure Pescadero Lagoon and the Pescadero steelhead run, and have contributed a great deal of volunteer effort and funding to fish habitat restoration activities in the Pescadero watershed. Additionally, steelhead fishermen provide support not only to the stream itself, but to the community of Pescadero as we lunch, dine and shop at local restaurants and stores.

We are not persuaded that the restrictive access and prohibition of fishing which follows a State Marine Reserve designation is warranted from a conservation perspective. However, we are certain eliminating recreational fishing in Pescadero Lagoon would result the loss of an important local recreational activity, the interruption of historic use, potential loss of local support towards steelhead conservation as the Lagoon's 'constituency' fades, and reduction in inputs to the local economy provided by steelhead fishermen and their families.

The loss of the opportunity to fish this lagoon hits our group especially hard. Our organization, The Native Sons of the Golden West Pebble Beach Parlor #230 is based in the town of Pescadero where we live and work. We created a Steelhead Committee some years ago and over the past several years, we have held two "Steelhead Festivals" in the town of Pescadero. During these day long events, we raised awareness and money for steelhead restoration efforts in this wonderful watershed. These monies, together with many hours of our donated labor have led to

on the ground restoration projects done in partnership with NOAA, DFG and State Parks. We have also facilitated efforts to establish a Pescadero Working Group of agencies, academics and stakeholders like ourselves who worked together to develop concepts and hopefully projects which will enhance the lagoon and associated creek and marsh.

We feel like we have become the eyes and voice for the steelhead fishery of Pescadero. We are effective because we know the lagoon and are on site, watching and observing. In order to be a good fisherman, you need to be a good observer. Many of us have fished the lagoon over our entire lives, as did our fathers. Many of us have dreams that our sons and daughters will follow us.

We have been told that the North Central Coast Marine Protected Area proposals are at an early stage of development and the maps showing the Pescadero Lagoon as a SMR are included only some of the Stakeholder subgroup draft proposals. Please notify us of any further opportunity for stakeholder comment or engagement in this planning process.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Tim Frahm, Native Sons Steelhead Comm.
650 560 0232
timfrahm@hotmail.com